MINUTES OF MEETING OF COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C., MARCH 25, 1926.

The sixth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1926 was held in its office in the Interior Department Building, on Thursday, March 25, 1926.

The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Greenleaf,
Mr. Mowbray,
Mr. Medary,
Mr. Delano,
Mr. Taft,
Mr. Garfield,

also Mr. H. P. Caemmerer, Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The minutes of the meeting held February 18, 1926, were approved.

2. SESQUICENTENNIAL $2.50 GOLD PIECE: By letter dated February 27, 1926, the Director of the Mint submitted sketches for the Sesquicentennial $2.50 gold piece authorized by Congress. They were referred to Mr. Taft, who regarded the composition acceptable, but felt certain changes could be made in the interests of the design. The obverse represented a figure of Liberty holding a torch and the reverse Independence Hall.

Attention was called to the difficulty of showing a building on a coin which would be smaller than a ten cent piece, and Mr. Garfield suggested using possibly only the cupola or the center portion of the building; but it was thought that any such change in the design would interfere with the composition. Mr. Medary said that the sun and its rays should be omitted from the back of the building, as this would indicate that the sun rises on

the north side of the building, which is contrary to fact.

The Commission indicated desired changes on the sketches and submitted a report to the Director of the Mint. (Exhibit A).

3. SESQUICENTENNIAL HALF DOLLAR: The Director of the Mint submitted models for the Sesquicentennial half dollar, showing on the obverse the portraits of Presidents Washington and Coolidge and on the reverse the Liberty Bell. The models were approved. (Exhibit B).

4. VERMONT SESQUICENTENNIAL HALF DOLLAR: Under date of March 24, 1926, Miss M. M. O'Reilly, Acting Director of the Mint, submitted the following letter with models for the Vermont Sesquicentennial half dollar, authorized by Congress:

> "The Bennington Battle Monument Association has advised this Bureau that Mr. Charles Keck has been commissioned to execute the model for the Bennington memorial coin. The plaster cast prepared by Mr. Keck is transmitted to you for inspection and opinion as to its artistic merits, and its suitability for the purpose for which it is intended."

The models showed the usual inscriptions, with the head of Ira Allen on the obverse, and on the reverse Fay's Tavern. The models were a foot and a half in diameter.

The Commission disapproved the models, as being 'overdone', and the suggested design for the reverse was regarded inappropriate. However, Mr. Keck's ability as one of the good sculptors of this country was recognized. The Commission concurred in the suggestion of Mr. Moore that he have a conference with the Director of the Mint as to the design for this coin(Exhibit C)

5. WOODROW WILSON MEMORIAL: Under date of February 15, 1926, a letter was received from Mr. David Brcin, of Chicago (Exhibit D), together with photographs of a model prepared by him, asking the advice of the Commission as to a proposed monument to be erected to Woodrow Wilson in Washington, by

the American Poles, Checho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs.

The model represented President Wilson and a figure to represent "America aroused", back to back, on a pedestal of fourteen steps to represent the fourteen points. Mr. Taft did not regard the figure of America well modeled. On the whole the design did not commend itself to the Commission, and as no legislation had been enacted to provide for this Memorial the Commission concluded to take no further action in the matter. (Exhibit D-1).

Mr. Moore said that recently while talking with President Coolidge about monuments in Washington the President had said that if it would ever be deemed desirable to erect a monument to a President or other persons of a national character in the National Capital, he thought that the Government should provide for such a monument.

6. PLAINFIELD MEMORIAL FLAGPOLE: Under date of March 11th Mr. Harvey W. Corbett, architect, of New York City, submitted a design for a memorial flagpole at Plainfield, New Jersey, by authority of the War Memorial Committee at Plainfield.

The Commission approved the design, with the suggestion that the relief of the pedestal should be simplified.

7. PRESS CLUB BUILDING: On March 11, 1926, the following letter was received from the Board of Trade of Washington with regard to the Press Club building under construction at Fourteenth and F Streets, N.W.:

> "The Washington Board of Trade's Special Committee on Zoning has before it House Bill 9398, 69th Congress, First Session, a copy of which is enclosed.
>
> Our Committee is of the opinion that to pass such legislation would establish a bad precedent, but before taking action on the matter would like to receive the views of the Fine Arts Commission on the bill. Will you therefore be good enough to advise us how the members of the Fine Arts Commission feel in regard to the bill."

The secretary stated that he took up the matter with Major Wheeler,

Executive Officer of the Zoning Commission, who advised that under the Zoning Laws the Press Club could build only to a height of 110 feet, but that the plans contemplated building to a height of 160 feet. Under Bill H.R.9398, amended, they would be permitted to build to a height of 140 feet.

Lieut. Col. J. Franklin Bell, Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, had submitted informally the plans of the Press Club building for the use of the Commission in the consideration of this matter.

The Commission advised that they favored adhering to the Zoning Regulations and that if a change in the height of buildings is to be made it should be applied generally, to an entire block rather than to an individual building in that block. The Commission did not regard set-backs objectionable if buildings in a square are maintained at a uniform height. (Exhibit E).

8. COAST GUARD MEMORIAL: The Coast Guard War Memorial Committee, Commander W. J. Wheeler, Chairman, submitted tentative drawings received for their World War Memorial. The design, prepared by Mr. George Howe, Architect, of Philadelphia, suggested a pyramid, in front of which would be a small fountain and a sea gull.

The drawing had been made according to scale and contemplated a pyramid 10 feet on a side. Mr. Medary said that a pyramid of this size would be meaningless and that the designer was attempting too much in bringing the elements of a pyramid and a fountain in the same design. Commander Hunnewell of the Committee suggested in a sketch drawn by him the bow of a ship in stone, having a fountain in front of it.

Mr. Greenleaf urged a simple pool, with an architectural background and appropriate planting. Mr. Moore recommended a fountain similar to those frequently seen in Italian Gardens, as at the Villa d'Este, with an inscription

around the coping and with or without an object in the center.

Mr. Medary said the designer is capable of making a good design, and at the suggestion of the Commission Mr. Medary will confer with Mr. Howe in regard to the matter.

9. SECOND DIVISION MEMORIAL: On March 13, 1926, the following letter was addressed to the Commission by Captain C. O. Mattfeldt, Secretary of the Second Division Association, Washington Barracks, D.C.:

> "I have been directed by the President of the Second Division Association, Colonel Hanford MacNider, Assistant Secretary of War, to ascertain the method we should take in order to make application for a site for a memorial to be located in Washington to be erected by this Association. An early reply will be appreciated."

Mr. Moore stated that he had a talk with Colonel MacNider in regard to the Memorial, from whom he gathered that they were not planning for anything other than the conventional type of memorial to satisfy the present and the next generation, although Colonel MacNider had said the Association could raise any amount of money desired for the memorial. It was proposed by the Association to raise $200,000. Mr. Moore said he also had a talk with Captain Mattfeldt, who had no idea as to what would be appropriate for the memorial; that thereupon he suggested to Captain Mattfeldt to have a talk with Cass Gilbert, Jr., a member of the Second Division Association, in regard to the matter.

10. BRYAN MEMORIAL: Mr. Moore stated that Honorable Josephus Daniels had consulted him as to a Bell Tower as a memorial to William Jennings Bryan, for which the Association proposes to raise $1,000,000. The lowest bell would be 200 feet above the ground.

The question of erecting a Bell Tower in Washington has been under consideration for some time, it was recalled, and there has been discussion as to its location. Mr. Moore said the Bryan Memorial Association want Hains Point

which of course is impossible. Mr. Medary advised that Mr. Price Taylor, of England, whose firm has been erecting carillons in that country, in Belgium, and in other countries, will be in the United States some time in the near future, and Mr. Medary thought it desirable to have him come to Washington to advise as to a proper location for a Bell Tower. It was stated that the duty on bells is 40% and it has been suggested in the case of bells ordered for Mr. Bryan's home in Florida to have them manufactured in the United States.

11. FILTRATION PLANT--LANDSCAPE PLAN: Major James A. O'Conner, District Engineer Officer in Charge of Washington work, accompanied by several assistants, submitted a landscape plan for the treatment of the grounds and providing for the extension of Potomac Avenue, or the Canal Road, which now stopsat the Chain Bridge, so as to lead past the Filtration Plant grounds to the Conduit Road. The plan suggested adequate space for roadways and planting within the grounds, and the location of proposed residences for the Superintendent and workmen of the Filtration Plant. The plan was very favorably regarded by the Commission.

Drawings for the residences were inspected by the architect members of the Commission, who suggested a restudy of the plans, with the recommendations that the living rooms face the river and be given a southerly exposure, and that the details be as simple as possible.

12. NATIONAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC: On January 26, 1926, Hon. R. M. Elliott, Chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, House of Representatives submitted Bill, H. R.7755, "To designate a building site for the National Conservatory of Music of America, and for other purposes."

Mr. Moore stated that Mrs. Janet Thurber, President of the National Conservatory of Music of America" was in Washington recently and talked over

the matter with him; that Mrs. Thurber had in the course of 30 years done much to promote music in America, with headquarters in New York City, at a personal expense of over a million dollars, but that at the present time she has not the funds to erect a Conservatory of Music in Washington nor the means and the influence to provide for it.

The Commission regarded the plan to erect a National Conservatory of Music in Washington a worthy project, but decided that no site should be designated for it in the absence of positive assurance from the persons interested in the project that the building can be erected. (Exhibit F).

13. NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK COMMISSION PROJECTS,-EXTENSION OF SIXTEENTH STREET: Major Grant, Executive Officer of the National Capital Park Commission, attended the meeting of the Commission in the afternoon and considered with the Commission projects for the development of the National Capital. Mr. Moore asked Major Grant what the plans of the Park Commission are for the next year as to acquiring park areas and Major Grant replied that they had really no definite plans, that the Commission does not have a priority list, and that at the present time the Commission is without funds to acquire park areas,--for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1926, the Park Commission is to receive $600,000. Major Grant called attention to an organization recently formed in Washington to acquire land and hold it in reserve for future acquirement by the Government, but that Congress proposed placing a restriction on land purchases in the District of Columbia by allowing only a 25% increase over the assessed value. This, he said, will work hardship, although it may be possible that this clause in the pending District Appropriation Bill will be struck out before its final adoption.

The Commission inspected with interest a plan prepared in the District

Surveyor's office, upon the recommendation of the National Capital Park Commission, showing proposed changes in the District Highway Plan for the section adjacent to Sixteenth Street, north of Kalmia Road to the District Line, and providing for a great "Northern Portal" to the city at that location. Mr. Greenleaf called attention to the desirability of acquiring immediately a tract of land on Sixteenth Street, now privately owned, just above Alaska Avenue, for a great circle, from which a parkway should extend to the District Line and be developed with due regard to natural contours and the topography of that section of the city.

Major Grant said in the preparation of the plan an agreement was reached with the owners of property in the locality to provide for the changes in connecting streets, as indicated in the plan.

The Commission decided that the acquirement of this area from Kalmia Road to the District Line, including the land needed for park and parkway purposes, was one of the most important pending projects in the development of the city, and that the land needed to provide for the parkways and park areas should be purchased by the National Capital Park Commission immediately. (Exhibit G).

14. U. S. FLAG STANDARDIZATION: Mr. Mowbray advised that while on his way to Washington, on Wednesday, March 24th, he visited the New York Navy Yard and was in consultation with Commander Woodward and officials in regard to tests which are being made there of the red and blue dyes, as agreed upon at the recent conference at the Bureau of Standards. Mr. Mowbray said the work was progressing favorably and that it would require at least another month before the tests would be completed.

15. STUART JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: Mr. A. L. Harris, Municipal Architect, submitted a plan for the Stuart Junior High School, to be erected at Fifth and F Streets, N.E. The plan was inspected by the architect members of the

Commission and approved.

16. WASHINGTON WATERFRONT PLAN: Major Grant submitted for the consideration of the Commission a "cross section' of the proposed treatment of Water Street along the Washington Channel. The plan suggested a parkway along Water Street in addition to a traffic road, and two street car tracks, but to bring this about the U. S. Engineer's Office proposed to extend the bulkhead line out into the water. Mr. Greenleaf urged that the piers be omitted if at all possible and have simply a stone quay along the waterfront, as in great European cities.

The Commission felt that the "cross section" submitted did not give them adequate information as to the possibility of carrying out this development in the manner suggested along the entire length of Water Street and a more detailed plan was requested. (Exhibit H).

17. TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER: The Commission considered informally the question of completing the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Attention was called to the fact that recently Mr. Luce had introduced a Bill in the House of Representatives (H.J.Res.83), and S. J. Res.51, introduced by Senator Fess in the United States Senate, having in view an appropriation of $50,000 for the completion of the monument, and that on March 15, 1926, spoke on the Resolution he introduced in the House of Representatives; also that a Bill (H.R.10509) had been introduced on March 19th by Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr., providing for completion of the monument.

prepared by Mr. Thomas Hastings

Mr. Delano offered a sketch for the consideration of the Commission showing a simple sarcophagus on a low pedestal, with an approach to it by steps leading up to it from the ground level, instead of the present parapet at the east side of the Amphitheater.

The Commission had as their guests at luncheon Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Coolidge, of Boston, and Major Grant. The commission adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

COPY

March 26,1926.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on March 25, 1926, approved the sketches of the Sesquicentennial $2.50 gold piece, which you submitted with your letter of February 27th, with the suggestion that the obverse show the years 1776 and 1926, as indicated on the sketch, also that "E Pluribus Unum" be omitted from the obverse. Sketch marked "A" is preferred for the reverse, with the suggestion that the sun and its rays be omitted.

The Commission would be pleased to see models of the obverse and reverse of the proposed coin.

The sketches are herewith returned to you.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. R. J. Grant,

Director of the Mint,

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT A.

COPY

March 26, 1926.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on March 25, 1926, approved the models for the Sesquicentennial half dollar.

The models are herewith returned to you.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, Yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. J. J. Grant,

Director of the Mint,

Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT B.

COPY

April 5, 1926.

Dear Mr. Grant:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on March 25th, considered the models which were submitted by your office, for the Vermont Sesquicentennial half-dollar made by Charles Keck, of New York.

The models were not approved by the Commission, and I am enclosing a copy of the letter which has been sent to Mr. Keck after conference with you in regard to the matter.

Sincerely yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. R. J. Grant,
Director of the Mint,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT C.

COPY

April 2, 1926.

Dear Mr. Keck:

On examining your models for the Vermont Sesquicentennial coin the members of the Commission felt that the design would be improved by the elimination of the wreaths. The Commission had objected to an architectural motive for the reverse of the coin, and now the design comes back with the repetition of a building even less capable of medallic treatment than was the monument before proposed.

The Commission like your treatment of the head of Ira Allen. They feel that this head with the necessary lettering is quite sufficient for the obverse of the coin. Instead of the actual Catamount Tavern could you not introduce a catamount or something of that sort that will enable you to take some satisfaction in the coin as a work of art?

On consultation with the Director of the Mint it appears that from a technical standpoint the models are too large for the Mint to handle. They should be no more than nine (9) inches in diameter.

Cordially yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Charles Keck, Esq.,
40 West 10th Street,
New York, N. Y.

4 East Ohio St.,
Chicago, Ill.,
Feb. 13, 1926.

RECEIVED
COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
FEB 15 1926
NOTED

Secretary, Commission of Fine Arts,
1729 New York Ave., N. W.
Washington D. C.

Dear Sir:-

The American Poles, Checho-Slovaks and the Jugo-Slavs are planning to erect a monument to the memory of Woodrow Wilson in Washington, D. C and to present the monument to the government of the United States in appreciation of what America and Woodrow Wilson did in a moral and material way towards the independence and political unity of Poland, Checho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia.

They are in favor of the design that I submitted to them and the local committee before going any further with the plans has directed me to submit the design to the National Fine Arts Committee to pass upon it. I shall be pleased if you will lay the matter before them at their first meeting. The photographs of the design are mailed to you under separate cover.

The meaning of the monument is this: ---

There are fourteen steps symbolizing the Fourteen Points, leading to a platform upon which arises a gigantic architectural block symbolizing the weight Woodrow Wilson's name will have through the ages. On one side of the block stands a portrait statue of Woodrow Wilson, in bronze. I avoided depicting him in any definite phase of his life but made him strong and determined. On the other side of the block stands a symbolic figure of a woman called "America Aroused". She symbolizes the spirit of America during those cyclonic days of the War. In one hand she holds a sword, ---to free the Europeans, in the other a flaming torch, -- to enlighten them, to show them a better way to democracy. Woodrow Wilson played a leading role in arousing this spirit in America and I cannot think of anything more expressive, more symbolic of the crusading spirit of this country when entering the World War than the idealistic figure of America Aroused.

The figures are to be twelve feet in height and the monument as a whole would be forty feet from the ground line. It is to be built from granite and bronze.

Please advise me at your earliest convenience how soon I may hear from the committee.

Very truly yours,

John David Brcin

EXHIBIT D.

COPY

March 26, 1926.

Dear Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on March 25, 1926, considered the sketches which you submitted of your proposed design for a Woodrow Wilson Memorial to be erected in Washington by the American Poles, the Checho-Slovaks, and the Jugo-Slavs.

The design did not commend itself to the Commission. Furthermore, no legislation has been enacted by Congress providing for a Woodrow Wilson Memorial in Washington, and until such time the Commission is without authority to act in the matter.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. John David Ercin,
4 East Ohio Street,
Chicago, Illinois.

EXHIBIT D-1

COPY

March 26, 1928.

Dear Mr. Webster:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on March 25th considered your letter of March 11 in regard to the height of the building under construction at Fourteenth and F Streets, Northwest.

The Commission are unanimously of the opinion that the Zoning Laws as established should be observed according to their letter and their spirit. No special legislation should be enacted to give one person or a group of persons rights that are not extended to all other persons similarly situated. If the building under construction is "to be erected to a height not to exceed 140 feet above the F Street curb" (H.R.9398, Amended, Congressional Record, March 22, 1928, page 5800), then all buildings along F Street should be allowed to be built to that height.

The plans as submitted to the Commission provide for a set-back. The Commission of Fine Arts regard set-backs as desirable when properly regulated. The regulation of them should be carefully considered and should be made to apply throughout the city.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Ben. H. Webster, Secretary,
Washington Board of Trade,
Evening Star Building,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT E.

COPY

March 30, 1928.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on March 28, 1928, gave consideration to the Bill, H.R.7756, "To designate a building site for the National Conservatory of Music of America, and for other purposes", and in accordance with your request of January 30th, respectfully report as follows:

The Commission of Fine Arts regard the project to provide a National Conservatory of Music of America a worthy one. When those interested in the matter shall give evidence of ability to carry out the proposed scheme, a site can be found for the building.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, yours,

Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. W. R. Elliott, Chairman,
Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

EXHIBIT F.

COPY

March 27, 1930.

Dear Major Grant:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on March 25th, expressed their deepest interest in the plan prepared in the District Surveyor's office, upon the recommendation of the National Capital Park Commission, for the treatment of the area between Kalmia Road and the District Line. The Commission regard the treatment of this area as one of the few opportunities left to create a worthy entrance to the National Capital.

The Commission believe that this treatment should begin at the junction of Alaska Avenue and Sixteenth Street. Advantage should be taken of the last height along Sixteenth Street to develop there a great circle commanding a view of the White House, the Washington Monument, the Potomac River, and the Virginia Hills. From this circle a roadway should extend into the adjoining Rock Creek Park on the west and to the Army Medical Center on the east. The area between the college and the park should be controlled by the Government. From this great rond point on the crest of the hill a boulevard, as broad as possible, should sweep for a mile to the District Line. Preferably Sixteenth Street should be widened. If for any reason this cannot be done, the parking should be taken into the thoroughfare. All of the owners of the adjacent lots will be highly benefited by the widening of Sixteenth Street, to make developments proper to a suburban area.

The Commission highly approve the arrangements made with the property owners along Kalmia Road for a treatment of that section consonant with the topography of the District. Further, the Commission highly commend the provision for a great portal to the city as shown on the plan submitted. In this connection they call attention to another significant point, namely the junction of Eastern and Western Avenues at the northern apex of the District of Columbia. This point also should have a monumental treatment.

The Commission urge upon the National Capital Park Commission an immediate arrangement with the authorities of Maryland looking to the extension of Sixteenth Street through the new unoccupied area in Maryland with a view to getting a boulevard connection with Baltimore and another with Gettysburg. This entire project the Commission believe to be the opportunity now presented to prevent at least in this section the ravages that are going on in tearing down the hills and filling the valleys of the District of Columbia.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, yours,

Major U. S. Grant 3d, Executive Officer,
National Capital Park Commission,
Washington, D.C.

Charles Moore,
Chairman.

EXHIBIT G.

COPY

March 27, 1926.

Dear Major Grant:

Referring to the discussion with you at the meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts on March 25th, in regard to the treatment of Water Street along the Washington Channel, it was understood by the Commission that a further study of this roadway would be made so as to show the possibilities from its beginning to the War College. The Commission felt that they should have further information in regard to those portions of Water Street where the driveways must be narrowed, that is towards the Fifteenth Street end. The Commission would like to see such a plan as preliminary to the study of the "cross section".

Water Street for the main part is sufficiently wide to provide for a fine boulevard treatment along the waterfront. The ideal treatment along the water would be a straight line of stone quays such as are to be found in the great European cities having waterfronts. This is the ultimate aim for all water treatment and it would be worth some sacrifice, such as the lopping of steamers on particular occasions, to attain this end. The Commission understand from Major O'Connor that the water-borne traffic, comparatively small in itself, is confined to the local needs of the city, and that the development of the Anacostia River between the Pennsylvania and the Anacostia bridges will provide for a considerable portion of the traffic with better facilities for docking than are now possible in the narrow Washington Channel.

The primary needs along Water Street are adequate provisions for handling passengers and package traffic. This traffic is an attractive feature. The activity of the docks, the view out on the harbor, add life and interest to the thoroughfare. The driveway should also provide for a direct connection between Potomac Park and the War College and thence to the Anacostia Park. Just as soon as Water Street is paved with concrete it will become a much frequented thoroughfare between the points named. At present the lower end of the thoroughfare is dead. On the northern side a service driveway should be provided for the business structures which now line it. It is probable that business will continue to occupy this side of the thoroughfare.

The Commission revertsto the plan prepared under the direction of Colonel Harts in 1916 and regards this plan as an excellent point of departure for a study as respects to both the thoroughfare itself and the relations of the waterfront to East Potomac Park. These relations the Commission regard as of primary importance.

For the Commission:

Very respectfully, yours,

Major U. S. Grant 3d, Executive Officer,
National Capital Park Commission,
Washington, D.C.

Charles Moore,
Chairman.

EXHIBIT H.